

## VINE STREET EXPRESSWAY INTERSTATE 676



Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The William Penn Foundation

2002-2003

Project Type: Urban Freeway; Revitalization

### PURPOSE

The main goal of this project was the revitalization of the areas along the depressed portion of this urban highway. Project for Public Spaces (PPS) worked with the Center City District to make Vine Street, through its public spaces, a connector and link between the various neighborhoods along it. The project's goal was to integrate the road into its neighborhoods for the benefit of local people, including residents and businesses and to make this corridor an on-grade link between communities. This initiative looked at Vine Street as a local street in need of humanizing with improved pedestrian access. The focus is on creating "special places" in key destinations along Vine Street, such as Franklin Square, Chinatown, and Logan Square, all of which have the potential to become more active and attractive destinations.

### DESCRIPTION

Philadelphia's Vine Street Expressway is a sunken highway that divides its surrounding neighborhoods and discourages street life. The Vine Street corridor passes through several key places that can link neighborhoods together by serving as destination points.

### PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Working closely with Philadelphia's Center City District (PCCD) and numerous local stakeholders in both meetings and Placemaking workshops, PPS developed a series of concepts for enhancing Vine Street's major focal points and softening the street itself.

### CONTEXT SENSITIVE SOLUTIONS APPROACH

This project focused on creating "special places" in crucial locations along Vine Street, which had a catalytic effect in knitting the neighborhoods along the corridor back together, and humanizing an urban highway. The Vine Street corridor passes through several key places that can link neighborhoods together by serving as destination points. These revitalized places, together with a humanized, pedestrian-friendly treatment of the surface streets, transformed Vine Street into an urban boulevard that energizes and connects the neighborhoods along it.

**OUTCOME** The vision for Vine Street was presented in public meetings and summarized in a detailed report, which included short-term action plans for the three main destinations, rendered plans, and a proposed boulevard scheme. Conducted with the generous support of the William Penn Foundation, this project is now in its implementation phase.

**CHALLENGES** The Vine Street Expressway, in its current state, cuts right through the city center and divides its surrounding neighborhoods from one another and discourages street life. Even the surface-level streets on each side of the expressway feel like highways, with their wide lanes, fast-moving traffic, and poor pedestrian amenities.

**FUNDING** A small implementation grant was used to leverage funding major traffic and open space planning and improvements in Logan Circle. The small grants program is meant to help area residents achieve small-scale projects and is focusing on the civic associations already in the neighborhoods affected by the planning study—Chinatown, Logan Square, and Franklin Square. The priorities and guidelines for the program are still in the process of being defined with the active participation of local community partners. Grants will be distributed across all the neighborhoods. At project completion, each grantee and the PCCD will fill out a close-out form that verifies the project was completed and that the funds were spent. It also provides a preliminary evaluation of the project's success.



**KEY WORDS** *Applicable Project Delivery Stages:* Administration, Planning, Design, Construction

*Applicable Transportation Professionals:* Highway Engineers, Structural Engineers, Landscape Architects, Urban Planners, Urban Designers

*Applicable Transportation Modes:* Highway, Bicycle, Pedestrian, Transit

*Transportation Topics:* Visual Quality, Safety, Mobility

**WEB LINKS** [http://www.pps.org/info/projectexp/vine\\_street](http://www.pps.org/info/projectexp/vine_street)  
<http://www.pps.org/vineonline/>  
<http://www.wpennfdn.org/>

## CONTACTS

Project for Public Spaces (PPS)  
700 Broadway, 4th Floor  
New York, NY 10003  
Ph: 212 620-5660  
Fx: 212 620-3821  
[pps@pps.org](mailto:pps@pps.org)

The William Penn Foundation  
Two Logan Square, 11th Floor  
100 North 18th Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103  
Tel: (215) 988-1830  
Fax: (215) 988-1823  
[moreinfo@williampennfoundation.org](mailto:moreinfo@williampennfoundation.org)

